



**US Army Corps
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 27, 2011

Volunteers clean up Kawainui Marsh City Park

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(FORT SHAFTER, HI – NR 24-11)

More than thirty volunteers descended upon Kaha Garden at Kawainui Marsh City Park in Kailua for National Public Lands Day on Saturday, Sept. 24.

Started in 1994 by the National Environmental Education Foundation, the event takes place across the country and promotes volunteerism and conservation on public lands.

Volunteers representing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Punahou Army Junior ROTC, Radford High School, Hui o Ko'olaupoko, and area residents convened at the park to clean up garbage, spread mulch and pull invasive species.

Meaning "Big Water," Kawainui Marsh City Park is adjacent to the levee constructed by Honolulu District for flood mitigation. The park's Kaha Garden features many native plant species that are identified with placards.

Unfortunately, several invasive species flourish in the marsh and need to constantly be kept in check. Hui o Ko'olaupoko Community Coordinator Kristen Mailheau walked volunteers through the park and taught them how to identify the invasive species that needed to be removed. Some of the key targets for the group were mangroves, Chinese violets, Beggar's Tick and Maile Pilau or "Stinky" Pilau.

Hui o Ko'olaupoko means "Group of the Ko'olaupoko" with Ko'olaupoko being the region of Oahu. Some of the group's key focuses are watershed restoration and monitoring, community involvement and information dissemination.

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“Kawainui Marsh is such a great national treasure. As members of the community it was important for me and the District to be a part of this cleanup,” said Honolulu District Commander Lt. Col. Douglas Guttormsen. “National Public Lands Day is an opportunity for everyone to give a little back, to really understand what it means to respect and appreciate the land around you.”

“Participating in National Public Lands Day was a very worthwhile detour from my normal Saturday activities – kids’ sports.” said Honolulu District Deputy Chief for Programs and Project Management Steve Cayetano.

Cayetano brought his son Trent along to volunteer. “Together with my son, it was a great way to support the community, learn about different plant species and enjoy the camaraderie of other volunteers amid great weather!” said Cayetano. “I feel it is really important for my son to understand the importance of volunteering and being a good steward of our environment.”

In 2010, nearly 150,000 volunteers nationwide pitched in to collect litter and debris; remove fence and invasive plant species; plant trees and shrubs; build and improve trails; and participate in numerous other projects on public lands and waters. At USACE events last year, more than 13,000 volunteers worked approximately 46,000 hours to remove more than 800 tires, clear litter and debris from 260 miles of shoreline, build 48 miles of trails, and plant some 1,000 trees and shrubs.

In a Presidential Proclamation, President Barack Obama called on Americans across the country to participate. “On National Public Lands Day, we take time to appreciate our parks, national forest, wildlife refuges, and other public spaces, and we recommit to protecting and restoring them for future generations.”

USACE has been involved with National Public Lands Day since its inception in 1994 and has consistently been one of the event’s largest providers of sites and volunteers. As the nation’s leading federal provider of outdoor and water-based recreation, USACE manages more than 400 lake and river projects in 43 states. With a majority of these projects located within 50 miles of metropolitan areas, USACE sites proved a wide range of safe, affordable outdoor recreation opportunities close to home.

Here on Oahu, the Honolulu District operates the Pacific Regional Visitor Center at Fort DeRussy. The RVC features several exhibits spanning over 100 years of Corps’ history in Hawaii. For more information, please call (808) 438-2815.

To learn more about National Public Lands Day, visit <http://www.publiclandsday.org/>.